



**DRAFT
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
PLAN**

September 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Snowy Valleys Council comprises many diverse communities in townships, villages, rural and semi-remote locations.

It is important that Council listens to and understands the aspirations, values and needs of these communities in order to ensure that we can make informed decisions and continue to support these communities into the future.

This Community Participation Plan incorporating Council's Community Engagement Strategy reflects our commitment to engaging with the community, and other local and regional stakeholders, to ensure that all voices are heard, including those that are harder to reach.

This strategy has been developed in line with Section 402 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, Part 2 Division 2.6 Section 2.22.

We believe that fostering transparent, inclusive and meaningful engagement is fundamental to the delivery of high quality services and infrastructure.

By working more closely with the community and stakeholders, we aim to facilitate a cultural shift, both inside our organisation and within the community, to make decisions that are more informed and reflect the broad views and ideas of the people of Snowy Valleys Council.

We believe that effective community engagement will lead to better outcomes and decision making, and will help us live up to our vision of "leading, engaging and supporting strong and vibrant communities".

Snowy valleys Council recognises community participation throughout the planning system, when applicable, is not only your right; it also delivers better planning results.

Ultimately, our responsibility is to deliver the objectives of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) including the promotion of orderly and economic use of land, facilitating ecologically sustainable development and promoting social and economic wellbeing.

Community participation is an overarching term covering how Council will engage the community in our work under the EP&A Act, including plan making and making decisions on proposed development. The level and extent of community participation will vary depending on the community, the scope of the proposal under consideration and the potential impact of the decision.

The community includes anyone who is affected by the planning system and includes individuals, community groups, Aboriginal communities, peak bodies representing a range of interests, businesses, local government, and State and Commonwealth government agencies.

PART 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Our definition of community engagement has been adapted from the International Association of Public Participation model (IAP2):

“Any process that involves the community in problem solving or decision making and uses community input to make better decisions”.

Community engagement are those activities that we use to gather and share knowledge, and interact with relevant stakeholders and the community, so that we can:

- Include community knowledge in the design and implementation of our strategies, programs and initiatives
- Seek feedback from the community on proposed services, strategies, programs and initiatives
- Involve the community in the implementation and monitoring of identified programs and projects
- Develop enduring partnerships with key stakeholders that enable the sharing of ideas, resources and responsibilities for our strategies, programs and initiatives
- Better inform the community about our services, strategies, programs and initiatives

Effective and consistent community engagement:

- Assists us in our decision making and helps to strengthen our relationship with the community.
- Covers a wide variety of Council-community connections and interactions, ranging from simple information sharing to active participation in government policy development and its decision-making processes
- Is the process of purposeful and timely information exchange between the Council and the community
- Relies on active, constructive participation from the community and positive, proactive participation from Council
- Utilises a range of methods such as surveys, media releases, meetings, listening posts, traditional advertising, public meetings, social media etc.
- Is meaningful, respectful and recognises diversity within the community
- Is constantly evolving and changing
- Is a statutory requirement in some instances, such as planning permits
- Does not replace the final decision-making power of Councillors, however it is invaluable in the way it enhances our capacity to make well-informed, acceptable and sustainable decisions.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

There are three key documents and a toolkit which underpin our consistent approach to Community Engagement practice at Snowy Valleys Council:

Community engagement policy

The policy is our overarching statement of intent that defines our commitment to, and the principles of, Community Engagement.

Community engagement strategy

The strategy sets out our Community Engagement objectives and the guidelines for successful engagement.

Community engagement action plan

The action plan details our key commitments and actions to continually improve our engagement practices.

Community engagement tool kit

The toolkit provides the relevant tools and templates for our staff to utilise when planning for and undertaking community engagement.

Why do we need a community engagement framework?

Our Community Engagement Framework allows us to:

1. Inform the community about our approach to community engagement and encourage the community to become involved.
2. Improve the nature of our decision making and help to build and strengthen the relationship that we have with the community, as well as other stakeholders.
3. Recognise diversity within the community and incorporate this into our planning of engagement activities.
4. Enable a consistent, transparent and high quality approach to the planning and undertaking of community engagement.
5. Foster a culture of community engagement among our council staff, management and Councillors.
6. Provide guidance to our council staff, project managers, Councillors and community on our consultation principles, methods and resources

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STRATEGY?

The Community Engagement Strategy aims to provide a best practice approach in all community engagement activities, and guides us on how to build our capacity to plan, deliver, and evaluate effective community engagement practices across the Snowy Valleys Council.

The Community Engagement Strategy ensures both stakeholders and the community have the opportunity to provide feedback and inform the decisions made by Council.

Objectives of our Community Engagement Strategy include:

- To ensure a commitment by Councillors and Council staff (including external contractors and consultants) to engage with the community in a meaningful and appropriate way about decisions that affect them
- To set the strategic direction for community engagement practice for Snowy Valleys Council
- To provide a consistent and flexible process for staff to guide the selection of the most appropriate method and level of engagement for any project or decision to be made
- To develop a level of trust and confidence with our community and stakeholders to engender a long term sustainable relationship and commitment to a shared vision for Snowy Valleys Council
- To complement, interact with and enhance all existing Council initiatives that are working towards community and stakeholder partnerships, and the realisation of the Snowy Valleys Council vision

OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Effective community engagement is built on trust, respect and goodwill. Our commitment to community engagement is governed by the following set of principles that underpin our engagement processes and practices:

1. Integrity and transparency

Engagement involves trust and transparency. The levels of community influence will be clearly communicated. Consultation and higher forms of engagement must be genuinely purposeful and not tokenistic. We will carefully consider and accurately portray the community's role in the decision making process and provide feedback on how the community has influenced its decisions.

2. Respect

We will value contributions made by way of experience, skills and knowledge and respect any time given to the engagement process. Timely feedback on the results and the influence of specific consultation and active engagement to the community is a critical part of the process. This information needs to be given directly to those who contributed as well as made widely available so those who may have an interest can access it.

3. Inclusivity

We will use a range of opportunities and techniques to encourage participation and awareness of all people who may be affected by or interested in the outcome. It will ensure that a diverse and representative range of stakeholders are engaged (e.g. geographical location, age, gender, disability, culture, language, literacy and interest in the project).

4. Informative

Effective engagement requires all parties to understand the relevant legal, statutory, strategic and local context. We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and evaluation of a decision. We will use appropriate language.

5. Shared learnings

We will establish ongoing internal partnerships and communications with each other inside the organisation to share our skills, knowledge and community engagement evaluation findings to better inform future engagement initiatives, making sure we learn from our mistakes.

6. Well planned

Community engagement requires informed judgement and planning in its approach and implementation in order to be effective, practical and suitably resourced. We will take the time required to consider and design effective engagement plans as part of our project delivery planning, and we will resource is appropriately.

7. Meaningful

Our community will have multiple opportunities to participate in community engagement processes that are clearly articulated in relation to project constraints, the scope of community influence, and Council's decision making process. Community members will understand their role within this process.

Our community engagement principles continue...**8. Feedback**

Closing the loop on engagement is important in maintaining an open and transparent process. We will ensure that the community understands how their input was considered and the reasons for the final decision. We will also inform the community of the expected timeframes for providing feedback

9. Part of our culture

We will, through our commitment to internal capacity building and organisational culture, foster a proactive, positive attitude towards community engagement. Community engagement will be built into our decision making processes and project plans, and adequately resourced in budgets and timeframes.

10. Efficiency and value for money

Community engagement planning and implementation will optimise internal and external linkages, resources and systems to minimise duplication and cost, and to reinforce public perceptions of effectiveness and good value for money.

11. Innovation and continuous improvement

We will explore new and innovative ways to listen to and engage with members of our community. We will continue to improve our community engagement practices and capacity through regular review and improvement mechanisms.

12. Privacy

We will take all reasonable and appropriate steps to protect the privacy of individuals as required by relevant legislation. Project teams will ensure they use correct collection notices and privacy statements on all online and hardcopy consultation materials that capture any identifying personal information. The way information is collected, stored and used will also comply with legislative requirements.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Why do we engage?

Community engagement fosters a sense of belonging and community ownership of project outcomes.

It engages a higher level of responsibility around creating a community-centred council, both internally within the organisation and externally through the community.

Asking for the views of the community will help us make sustainable decisions and better understand local issues and needs.

Stakeholder and community input improves the quality of policy and strategy at the time it is being developed, ensuring the end result is relevant to the needs of the community.

Well planned engagement provides ideas and an opportunity for a diverse range of voices to be heard on any issue, promotes a higher standard of customer service, a better understanding of the 'decisions to be made,' and more opportunity for meaningful feedback.

Who do we engage?

Community

A community can be defined as a group of people united by at least one common characteristic such as geography, shared interests, values, experiences, or traditions.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is anyone who has the ability to influence a project's outcomes (either positively or negatively) and may comprise individuals and/or organisations from across the community that are directly involved in, or significantly affected by the project.

Harder to Reach

There are some people and groups who may find it more difficult to participate in engagement activities and are often referred to as 'hard to reach'. For example, those from minority groups or with limited personal resources such as homeless people, teenagers, people who are new to the Snowy Valleys Council area, people from different cultural backgrounds and people with a disability.

The circumstances of each individual within these groups will vary and engagement approaches should be adapted accordingly.

When do we engage?

Each time there is a project to be developed or a decision to be made there is an opportunity for a community engagement process.

Early notice of emerging issues puts us in a better position to respond in a proactive way. In the engagement planning process, consideration is given to the complexity of the decision and the optimal time needed for people to respond.

Whilst our community engagement activities can take place at any time of the year, the planning for community engagement will take into account key dates, notably the Christmas and New Year period, other public holidays, school holidays and any special events that may impact on the community's availability.

The timing and planning for community engagement activities may also depend upon our program of work.

Whilst the Local Government Act sets out minimum requirements for some specific consultations, each engagement process is considered on its individual basis and merit.

To ensure a successful consultation, careful consideration is given to the appropriate tools and timing for the project or decision.

As a general rule, we will engage:

- To help make decisions on current and emerging issues
- When the community has raised an issue
- Where the community could be impacted by a project, initiative, service or decision
- On all major Council Plans, Strategies and Policies
- When it is a statutory, legislative or regulatory requirement, such as planning permit applications

However, there are time when we may not be able to engage widely:

- When time frames and methodology have been predetermined by other levels of government
- Where other levels of government are leading the consultation.
- When an immediate response is required, such as in response to an emergency

In Council-led projects and initiatives, community engagement does not replace the final power of Council as decision maker, but it is an invaluable process in enhancing our capacity to make well-informed, defensible and sustainable decisions on behalf of our community.

How do we engage?

In any decision-making process, the level of engagement will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the project or decision.

Consideration is given to things like community and stakeholder interest, political sensitivity, opportunities for partnerships, the level of social, economic and environmental impact, legislative requirements, time, resource and financial constraints.

Council is guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) when determining the most appropriate level of engagement for each situation or project.

Levels of engagement

The table below shows five levels of engagement and outlines the amount of involvement from both the Council and community within each level. The process of engagement is a dynamic one; there is likely to be movement back and forth through the different levels as the engagement is implemented throughout the project/process.

While the final decision rests with Council, open and responsible governance is based on a belief that those impacted by a decision have important contributions to make in the decision-making process.

Before beginning any engagement process it is important for us as decision makers to establish how much influence we will give to the community, so that the objectives for the engagement and the expectations are known and clear from the outset.



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	One way communication to provide balanced and objective information to assist in understanding something that is going to happen or is about to happen	Two way communication s designed to obtain feedback on ideas, alternatives and proposals to inform our decision making	Participatory process where we work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns, aspirations are understood and considered prior	Working together in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution for joint	To place final decision making and/or devolved budgets in the hands of the public
The SVC promise	We will openly share information about a decision, direction, event, activity or program.	We will explore options, gain feedback and an understanding of your	We will work with you in the process so that your ideas, concerns and aspirations are directly reflected	We will collaborate with you so that your advice, innovation and recommendati	We will implement what you decide
Community/ stakeholder role	To listen	To contribute	To participate	To partner	To decide
Engagement technique examples	Advertisement Community noticeboards Community events Website Fact sheets Brochures Information Sessions Displays Letters Newsletters Newspaper Media releases Community Radio Report Signage / Posters Social Media Stakeholders Briefing	Briefings Comment/feedback forms Drop in sessions/pop ups Focus groups Forum Interviews Online Discussion Public exhibition call for submissions Public Meetings Surveys Workshops	Community reference panel Focus group Personal briefings Stakeholder meetings Tours and field trips Workshops	Chamber of Commerce Community Progress Associations Reference group S355 committees Strategic Advisory Committees Steering / Project Committees Working Party	Citizen jury Elected councillors Placemaking Community progress associations Youth Council S355 Committee

INFORM

In this area of the spectrum, we are sharing information with the community through awareness, education or information campaigns and feedback mechanisms.

There are situations when stakeholders and the community need to receive information to gain a better understanding of an issue or to understand why a decision has been made.

'Inform' is the appropriate level of engagement when the aim is to provide information about a decision or outcome, who it was made by and what the consequential impact on stakeholders and the community will be.

We will also use 'Inform' to communicate information such as events, programs and activities.

We may also use 'Inform' at the conclusion of an engagement activity to impart feedback and outcomes.

For example, a fact sheet or letter is sent to stakeholders and the community, an advertisement is put in the local newspaper.

CONSULT

In this area of the spectrum, we will ask for input from, and listen to, the community.

Consult is the appropriate level of engagement when input, views or feedback are sought from the community to better inform a decision-making process, or to help inform the direction of a proposed plan or project.

'Consult' is selected when Council asks and listens to the community about ideas to improve something, to obtain views on a particular proposal, understand what would happen if Council made a certain decision, or when a number of possible options are provided and which option is preferred.

Consultation should not be restricted to controversial or wide-ranging matters. The following are offered as examples of initiatives and projects that should include a consultative component:

- Matters that directly and significantly affect a large number of people;
- Involve significant numbers of people with strong views on the subject;
- Affect the rights, entitlements or social wellbeing of the community;
- Council policy development, improvement or implementation;
- Council service development, improvement, planning or implementation;
- Localised community improvement;
- Major projects, strategic issues or resourcing plans that impact on the entire Snowy Valleys Council area;
- Site specific matters or events.

For example, a local community are invited to provide feedback on a draft plan to upgrade a nearby playground.

INVOLVE

In this area of the spectrum, Council utilises local expertise and knowledge in planning and implementation.

'Involve' is the appropriate level of engagement when local input is required to identify issues early and inform our planning process. This level of engagement is selected when we want to include the community early in the planning process to ensure all concerns and aspirations are both heard and understood.

Meaningful engagement in the 'Involve' area of the spectrum helps us to better tailor our services to local needs, resources are allocated in an effective and targeted way and the community takes greater responsibility for the outcomes of the decision.

For example, local residents, businesses and cyclists are engaged to help prepare a Cycling Strategy for Snowy Valleys Council. Their initial input and local knowledge is used to inform the development of a draft Plan, which is then given back to the wider Snowy Valleys community for further feedback and comments before being finalised.

COLLABORATE

In this area of the spectrum, government agencies, local networks, organisations, businesses and community work together with us to find solutions.

'Collaborate' is the appropriate level of engagement when Council or staff mutually share the decision-making with various levels of government, community groups, key stakeholders or members of the public.

'Collaborate' is usually selected where issues and solutions are unclear and Council works with equal power and partnership to find solutions that lead to an agreed outcome.

Effective 'Collaboration' requires significant time and resources from all parties.

For example, Council works closely with and supports a local progress association to identify local safety issues. We work together to gather local knowledge, evidence and statistics to better understand the issues and together develop an Action Plan to address our shared responsibility for local safety.

EMPOWER

In this area of the spectrum, community members are empowered to build their own future.

'Empower' is Council's promise is to 'implement what you decide'. Empower is selected when our community and stakeholders are provided with the skills, information, authority and resources in order to make the final decision.

'Empower' has limited application in Local Government, as the elected Council is responsible for making policy, strategic and budget decisions.

Under the Local Government Act, the only decision-making power which is entirely placed in the hands of the public is that of electing Council Members every four years.

OUR ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Quality engagement is well planned and executed, inclusive and accessible to a cross-section of the community.

The Snowy Valleys Council engagement process outlines three stages to ensure we deliver a consistent and robust approach to our engagement activities.

This includes a process of **planning** (developing a plan), **doing** (preparing and engaging) and **reporting** (providing feedback) on the engagement.



Step	Key Phase	Description
1	Scope the project, engagement needed and method	Determine the need for a Community Engagement Plan and specify how the engagement will influence the project/initiative/decision. Understand the needs and expectations of the decision makers and gain clarity of the scope of the work including what aspects are negotiable.
2	Identify and assess stakeholders/participants	Identify and assess the relevant participants and stakeholders and consider what role they will play in the engagement process
3	Determine level of influence/participation by stakeholders and participants	Determine the appropriate level of engagement and clarify the specific engagement process.
4	Choose techniques, evaluation strategies and design the engagement process including resources	Determine which methods will be used along with communication activities required. Determine the resources needed to support the engagement activity.

Key Phase		Description
5	Implement the engagement activities	Undertake the engagement activities as part of the integrated project plan.
6	Conduct review and feedback processes	Review and then provide feedback to decision makers, participants, stakeholders and community on progress of engagement activities, outcomes and impacts
7	Develop final evaluation	Complete evaluation process. Prepare final report for decision makers.

OUR VISION FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Successful community engagement for Snowy Valleys Council will be characterised by:

- Good planning of the engagement processes
- A clear purpose that is communicated to all
- Relevant target audiences are identified
- Effective two-way communication with clear and relevant information
- Transparency of both the engagement and decision making processes
- Shared values
- Multiple options to participate in the engagement processes
- Feedback is given on the outcomes of the engagement processes and on how these influenced the decision making process
- Timely engagement that enables fair and reasonable opportunity for the community to give input to the engagement processes

The Strategy outlines a number of directions to help achieve this vision for successful engagement:

- Strategic Direction 1:** **Accessible and transparent engagement practice**
- Strategic Direction 2:** **Effective communication and feedback**
- Strategic Direction 3:** **Enabling community involvement**
- Strategic Direction 4:** **Improved understanding, capacity and skill in
Community engagement practice**
- Strategic Direction 5:** **A coordinated approach to engagement practice**

PART 2 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN (CPP)?

Our community Participation Plan (CPP) is designed to make participation in planning clearer for the community. It does this by setting out in one place how and when you can participate in the planning system, our functions and different types of proposals.

This CPP also establishes our community participation objectives, which Council will use to guide our approach to community engagement.

What functions does the community participation plan apply to?	
Plan making	Strategic planning is an essential aspect of our work where we set the strategic direction, vision and context for the planning system in the Snowy. It involves planning for communities, which integrates social, environmental and economic factors with the area's special attributes and their future realisation within the planning system. Examples of this work include the creation of planning proposals for the local environmental plan subject to a gateway determination, standard instrument orders, development control plans and contribution plans.
Assessments	<p>The Council and some Council officers make planning decisions on a range of developments. When making decisions on these developments, consideration is given to whether land use proposals are in accordance with the strategic priorities of the Council, the NSW Government, public interest and applicable policies and guidelines.</p> <p>Proposals that are assessed may include residential developments, mining developments, and commercial and industrial development projects. In these proposals, the planning stage is just one aspect of the overall lifecycle and at other phases engagement may be undertaken by either proponent, NSW Government agencies or Council. In some instances, Council will require ongoing engagement as a condition of approval.</p>

WHO DOES THIS COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN (CPP) APPLY TO?

Council's CPP is a requirement of the Environment Planning & Assessment (EP&A) Act. (See Division 2.6 and Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act) and applies to the exercise of planning functions by the Council (and their delegates and nominees). The CPP will be reviewed on a periodic basis.

HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM?

Our community participation objectives

The table below illustrates the type of actions Council will undertake to deliver our community participation objectives and provides some descriptions of our current practice.

These objectives have been developed having regard to the community participation principles set out in Section 2.23(2) of the EP&A Act.

These objectives will be supported by measurable actions that Council will use to:

- Develop community participation programs.
- Embed best practice community participation.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our community participation.

Community participation objectives		
Objectives	Actions	Examples
Community participation is open and inclusive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage community participation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeping the community informed • promoting participation opportunities • seeking community input 2. Build strong partnerships with the community. 3. Ensure community engagement accurately captures the relevant views of the community. 4. Conduct community engagement opportunities in a safe environment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We engage resident groups to build community partnerships. Through these forums we can unpack what the community is concerned about, what it wants a project to achieve and how it might be able to satisfy its wider needs. 2. Council staff have a presence at community events relevant to planning matters. 3. We facilitate formal planning education programs targeted at industry groups that the community can access.
Community participation is easy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly set out the purpose of any engagement and how and when the community can participate in respect of a planning function. 2. Prepare information for the community that is relevant, concise, written in plain English that is easy to understand. 3. Use visual representations to make it easier to understand the possible impacts of a proposal. 4. Use best practice engagement methods and techniques. 5. Ensure information is accessible and seek input from groups who may find it difficult to participate in standard engagement activities (e.g. young and older people; people with disabilities; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community participation opportunities are advertised through channels including email, social media, press releases, advertisements, newsletters and our website. 2. Utilise interpreter services when required e.g. at community events and in respect of our plans, print, social media. 3. We use a range of technology such as interactive maps to make it easier to visualise how a plan or project will look and what it will mean for a local community. These tools are particularly effective at engaging younger audiences

Community participation objectives		
Objectives	Actions	Examples
Community participation is relevant	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly establish the purpose for engagement and tailor engagement activities to match the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> context (e.g. location; type of application; stage of the assessment process; previous engagement undertaken) scale and nature of the proposal and its impacts level of community interest community's preferences about how they would like to participate Adjust engagement activities (if necessary) in response to community input. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> We target information campaigns and surveys to specific audiences using paid and editorial media as well as organic and paid social media. Based on community feedback we may undertake additional engagement to further understand issues raised during initial consultations. Consultation outcomes have helped us better understand what is important to the community and led to the development of new policy initiatives.

Community participation objectives		
Objectives	Actions	Examples
Community participation is timely	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Start community engagement as early as possible, and continue this engagement for an appropriate period. Ensure the community has reasonable time to provide input. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> We require proponents for major projects to conduct pre-proposal and ongoing community engagement. Project updates and community participation opportunities are shared with community members.
Community participation is meaningful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how community input was taken into consideration, and ensure the response to community input is relevant and proportionate. Give genuine and proper consideration to community input. Keep accurate records of engagement activities and community input. Regularly review the effectiveness of community engagement. Integrate community input into the evaluation process. Comply with any statutory obligations. Protect privacy and respect confidentiality where applicable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Our planning staff regularly engage with community groups to ensure that feedback has been understood. Provisions of our plans or the proposed development may change in response to community feedback. Feedback is provided to community members who participated in the process, as well as other channels such as our website, social and mainstream media.

Our approach to community participation

Council will design our engagement approach so that even where there may not be community wide consensus on the decision or outcomes, there can be acknowledgment that the process was fair with proper and genuine consideration given to community views and concerns.

To achieve the benefits of community participation in the planning system, Council will tailor community participation approaches for all our planning functions in accordance with 'The Community Engagement Process' outlined earlier in this plan.

It is important to note that the planning process is only one part of an overall project lifecycle in which you can participate. Outside of this standard process, in some circumstances, Council will also undertake post-determination, compliance and enforcement activities to ensure that planning laws and decisions are implemented correctly.

To achieve the best planning results, we must ensure everyone can participate in a safe and open manner. All community members, stakeholders and our staff have the right to participate in a respectful environment and behave in a manner that supports everyone's right to present their point of view.

Council will provide the community with feedback on how we are responding to its input as part of our engagement activities. Council will provide reports on the community's feedback to demonstrate how we have given genuine and proper consideration to their input. These reports summarise the input and describe how community views were considered in reaching a determination. Depending on the timing of a decision, these reports may be published prior, at the time of or following the making of a decision.

THE ROLE OF EXHIBITIONS IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Opportunities to participate in the planning system will respond to the nature, scale and likely impact of the proposal or project being considered or assessed. A regular and valuable way for the communities to participate in the planning system is by making a submission on a proposal during an exhibition.

Exhibitions

A key technique Council use to encourage community participation is formal exhibitions. During an exhibition, we make available relevant documents that may include a draft of a policy, plan or proposed development that we are seeking community input on. In conducting an exhibition, we receive submissions in accordance with our development control plan and we adhere to our Privacy Policy and defamation and discrimination laws.

In reaching decisions on proposals that have been exhibited, the Council balance a wide range of factors to ensure that decisions are in the public interest. This includes considering the objects of the EP&A Act, strategic priorities of the Council and the Government, the community's input, land use priorities identified in strategic plans and applicable policies and guidelines.

It should be noted that submissions may be made available to the applicant and the public – this may include publication on council’s website, in accordance with Schedule 1 clause 3 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018* including both the grounds of the submission and the identity of the submitter.

How can you get involved in a public exhibition?

Options include:

- Make a formal submission on an exhibition by emailing Council or by writing to the General Manager.
- Visit Council and staff will help you access public exhibition documents. Council staff will also answer any questions that you have or connect you to an appropriate officer who can help you.
- Connect directly with Council staff working on a proposal, policy, plan or project. Contact details are typically available on our website.

Please note that exhibition timeframes vary in length. Some timeframes are prescribed in legislation and others are at Councils discretion. Details of typical and minimum mandatory and typical timeframes are provided below.

Exhibition timeframes

Section 2.21(2) of the EP&A Act details the types of proposals that must be considered in the CPP and Schedule 1 sets a minimum exhibition timeframe for most of these proposals. Council will always exhibit a proposal for this minimum timeframe and will consider an extended timeframe for exhibition based on the scale and nature of the proposal.

The only requirements in this plan that are mandatory are those set out in the table below:

PLAN MAKING MANDATORY MINIMUM EXHIBITION TIMEFRAMES	
Plan Type	No. of Days
Draft Community Participation Plan	28
Planning Proposals for Local Environmental Plans subject to a gateway determination	28 or as otherwise specified in the gateway determination
Draft Development Control Plan	28
Draft contributions plans	28

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT MANDATORY MINIMUM EXHIBITION TIMEFRAMES	
Application Type	No. of Days
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development)	14 Note: In accordance with Clause 1.7.2 of Snowy Valleys Council Development Control Plan 2019 notification is not required where, in the opinion of Council, the enjoyment of land will not be detrimentally

DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT MANDATORY MINIMUM EXHIBITION TIMEFRAMES	
Application Type	No. of Days
	<p>affected in terms of the matters listed in these controls. Specific Development Applications that will not be notified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single storey residential buildings (houses, garages etc.) where there is no potential for adverse impacts on adjoining premises and there are no variations to standards being sought • swimming pools • strata subdivisions, and • new works involving alterations to an existing building which will not result in changes to the height or adverse impacts on privacy
Application for development consent for designated development	28
Application for development consent for State significant development	28
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1 of the EP&A Act	28
Environmental impact statement for State significant infrastructure under Division 5.2 of the EP&A Act	28

Key points to be aware of regarding public exhibitions include:

- A public authority is not required to make available for public inspection any part of an environmental impact statement whose publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason.
- Timeframes are in calendar days and include weekends.
- If the exhibition period is due to close on a weekend or a public holiday, Council may extend the exhibition to finish on the first available workday.
- The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.

Some of our functions and proposals do not have minimum exhibition timeframes. As a matter of course in line with our community participation objectives, Council will typically exhibit documents related to the exercise of these functions and proposals for the timeframes described in the table below:

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Snowy Valley Council
Draft Community Participation Plan – September 2019

NON-MANDATORY MINIMUM EXHIBITION TIMEFRAMES	
Document/Application Type	No. of Days
Draft policies and guidelines	28 dependent upon the urgency, scale and nature of the policies and guidelines.
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the EP&A Act Regulations	Up to 14 days based on the scale and nature of the proposal.
Re-exhibition of any amended application or matter referred to in the plan making or development assessment tables above	Discretionary taking into account the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal.

There may be other proposals not subject to the mandatory exhibition timeframes for which Council have the option to exhibit for at least 28 days and engage with the community in line with community participation objectives. Additionally, there may be some occasions where a Council priority or administrative requirement demands immediate action on proposals that prevents the implementation of our usual community participation process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Part 2 of this document has been adapted from the 'Coolamon Shire Council Community Participation Plan'.

SUPERSEDING POLICY NO. AND TITLE:

Snowy Valleys Council Community Engagement Strategy April 2017

History table:

Version No	Development /Amendment	Approval Date	Resolution Number	Activity log
Draft				Presented to Council for Public Exhibition
				Adopted Ordinary Council Meeting